



Beyond Flexner Alliance 2020 Annual Report

Beyond Flexner Alliance

Beyond Flexner Alliance (BFA) is a national movement, focused on health equity and training health professionals as agents of more equitable health. This movement takes us beyond centuries-old conventions in health professions education to train providers prepared to build a system that is not only better, but fairer.

The Beyond Flexner Alliance movement started with a 2012 conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that brought national attention to medical schools with strong social mission commitment, created a forum for collaboration and shared innovations, and legitimized the important role of health professions education in addressing social inequities.

We are now the Beyond Flexner Alliance.

What is social mission?

The social mission of a health professions school is the contribution of the school in its mission, programs, and the performance of its graduates, faculty and leadership in advancing health equity and addressing the health disparities of the society in which it exists.

Vision

Health professions education in which social mission is present, prominent, and valued to drive health equity and improved health for individuals, families, and communities.

Mission

The Beyond Flexner Alliance aims to promote social mission in health professions education by networking learners, teachers, community leaders, health policy makers and their organizations to advance equity in education, research, service, policy, and practice.

Director's Foreword

Amidst the backdrop of Covid-19 and increased visibility of racial and social injustice, the Beyond Flexner Alliance navigated a particularly challenging 2020. We adapted some of our focus areas in support of the immediate challenges presented by the changing environment, while still maintaining and even strengthening our commitment to proactive change. As indicated by our organizational growth and reported impacts, our team has demonstrated a remarkable amount of agility and energy in support of our mission.

2020 also marked the beginning of our strategic planning process, informing our new operating plan that will be launched in spring of 2021 and will guide the efforts of our organization for the next three years. We reviewed our objectives and accomplishments, conducted an environmental scan to assess the current social mission landscape, and enlisted our Board of Directors and partner organizations in contributing to the prioritization of our goals.

The Beyond Flexner Alliance is continuing to move forward an agenda of equity and justice. We will continue to push for accountability across health professions training programs and institutions by organizing our community, advocating for policy change, measuring and spotlighting the contribution of social mission in achieving health equity, and supporting the broad implementation of social mission practices.

BFA Impacts

BFA activities were adapted and expanded in some instances during 2020 in response to Covid-19. While the annual conference could not take place due to the effects of the pandemic, a range of other initiatives were implemented to ensure continued engagement and impact. BFA advanced its work on two seminal projects, the Social Mission Metrics Initiative (SMMI) and the Health Workforce Diversity Tracker, co-sponsored the second annual Mullan Health Workforce Equity Summit with the Mullan Institute and the George Washington University (GW) School of Medicine and Health Sciences Anti-Racism Coalition and began organizing the Beyond Flexner Alliance Student Assembly (BFASA) – a student centered arm of BFA, focused on bringing together interdisciplinary health profession students passionate about social mission. BFA also implemented an Internship Program to support students whose training opportunities were limited or changed due to Covid-19. These activities along with other key initiatives have allowed the organization to grow our impact and reach during the past year.

Social Mission Metrics Initiative

In 2020, the Social Mission Metrics Initiative (SMMI) employed a variety of strategies to advance the science of measuring social mission in health professions schools. Building on the success of prior years, the research team has focused their efforts on 1) refining and validating the Social Mission Metrics Survey; and 2) developing a strategic plan for the future of the Initiative. Key informant interviews with participants of the 2019 National Social Mission Self-Assessment campaign provided insights into how dental, medical, and nursing school leaders are thinking

about social mission in 2020, as well as what the impact of self-assessment participation was on their school. Early findings from this process suggest that self-assessment participation provided a valuable opportunity for schools to evaluate and benchmark their internal social mission priorities and activities. In addition, social mission is viewed as needed now more than ever due to Covid-19 related health disparities and the increased focus on racial justice across the country.

Quantitative methods to assess survey reliability and validity have allowed the research team to begin a survey burden-reduction strategy and evaluate the association between survey scores and workforce-related health equity outcomes. Collectively, these efforts will guide the research team in their strategic plan development process for SMMI.

The SMMI also continued to raise awareness about social mission through publication, presentations, and webinar participation. [Social Mission Metrics: Developing a Survey to Guide Health Professions Schools](#), a perspective piece describing the survey development process, was published in the December 2020 issue of Academic Medicine. Social mission was the focus of a webinar session in Emergency Health Workforce Policies to Address Covid-19 Webinar Series entitled, [Social Mission in Health Professions Schools. Findings from the 2019 national self-assessment](#) were presented in a health workforce poster session at the Academy Health's Annual Research Meeting during the summer. Social mission was later presented in the Fitzhugh Mullan Institute for Health Workforce Equity (Mullan Institute) Summit, [Structural Racism and Health Profession's Education](#). As an extension of the initial Social Mission Metrics Initiative, the research team has engaged in a study examining the scope of social mission content in major United States and Canadian health professions accreditation standards. A presentation of their findings was made at the [Nexus Summit 2020](#).

Health Workforce Diversity Tracker

In 2020, the Mullan Institute received support to study and report on the diversity of the current health workforce and the educational pipeline. Using data from the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the project will produce reports and publish peer-reviewed articles on diversity in health professions nationally, by state and by institution, and across up to 30 health professions. The Tracker is a pivotal initiative co-led by the Beyond Flexner Alliance to examine the diversity of the health workforce and support change through data access.

Health Workforce Equity Summit

The Beyond Flexner Alliance co-sponsored the second annual Mullan Health Workforce Equity Summit with the Mullan Institute and the George Washington University (GW) School of Medicine and Health Sciences Anti-Racism Coalition. The Summit, [Structural Racism and Health Profession's Education](#), touched on a set of broad themes related to setting priorities and strategies to increase diversity in the health workforce. Dayna Bowen Matthew, JD, PhD, Dean of GW's Law School and author of Just Medicine: A Cure for Racial Inequality in American Health Care presented the keynote presentation. Expert panel speakers focused on initiatives and opportunities to create better educational pathways for minority students, explored the experience of health professions students and faculty of color and how to improve their experience, and focused on policy changes to promote equity.

Community Engagement

The Beyond Flexner Alliance has prioritized deeper engagement with partners in the health professions education and growing the social mission movement. Our Outreach and Allies team has expanded our confirmed affiliates to 17 partners across education, policy, and practice. Several outreach events and co-sponsored activities took place during 2020:

- [Applying Systems Thinking to Address Structural Racism in Health Professions Education: Curriculum, Structural Competency, and Institutional Change](#), American Medical Association and the Beyond Flexner Alliance, Webinar
- [Stepping Out of Our "Lanes" and Reimagining Interprofessional Education](#), Center for Integration of Primary Care and Oral Health Continuing Professional Education Series, Webinar
- [Med Students, Physicians Need Social Mission Education Now More Than Ever](#), STAT news article by Drs. Jamar Slocum, Isabel Chen, and Natalie Kirilichin
- Health Professions Education and Community Engagement Twitter Chat, Beyond Flexner Alliance and National Collaborative for Education to Address SDOH
- Beyond Flexner Alliance response to the House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neals' request for information regarding the misuse of race and ethnicity in research and clinical outcomes
- Health Equity and the Social Mission of Health Professions Education; breakout presentation at the GW School of Nursing faculty retreat
- [Social Mission Now: The Role of Health Professions Education in Addressing Health Equity and Social Justice](#), Harvard Medical School Center for Primary Care Piece, co-authored by Dr. Candice Chen and BFA Summer Intern, Autumn Nobles

Student Assembly

With the help and vision of the 2020 summer interns, BFA began organizing a Beyond Flexner Alliance Student Assembly (BFASA) – a student centered arm of BFA, focused on bringing together interdisciplinary health profession students passionate about social mission. The official launch of the BFASA is planned for January 2021 and will seek to serve as a resource to bring students together to promote social mission, network, and organize around health equity.

Leading up to the official launch, the BFASA initiated the start of Health Education Leaders Pushing (HELP) for Change Webinar Series. This series aims to highlight rising stars and empower health professionals students. BFASA partnered with the American Medical Student Association (AMSA) to co-host the first webinar, Reimagining Health Professions School for Students of Color during Covid-19. This webinar hosted for students, by students, provided a safe environment for students to discuss the challenges and concerns about life as a student during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowed students to speak to the accommodations they hope to see, and to provide tangible strategies and tips to tackle the upcoming school year. The webinar had a total of 149 registrants, approximately 88 attendees, 2 moderators, and 4 speakers.

The second webinar in the series, Health Professions Students Voices on Voting and the Election, took place in January 2021, co-hosted alongside the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA). This webinar provided an insight into various voting initiatives, created a safe environment for students by students to discuss their response and viewpoints regarding the 2020 election results, and allowed students to share top health professions student issues for the Biden/Harris Administration to address.

BFA will continue working to refine the organizational structural and strategic plan for the student assembly and look forward to a formal launch in 2021.

Communications

The BFA website is the main source of information for audiences interested in learning about the organization and many visitors to the site are new. Ensuring that the website remains current and accessible is an important element of our communication efforts and we invested time and resources to refresh the website in 2020. The refresh included an updated logo, new features to make the website more engaging and enhancements to the site's look and feel. We were pleased to launch the new BFA website in December 2020 and hope that it will strengthen our online profile.

BFA's social media presence has experienced growth across all major platforms. Twitter has been a particularly active space for community engagement and BFA saw its number of Twitter followers double since 2018. Our Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn following have grown marginally and there's an opportunity for us to expand our engagement through these platforms in the future.

Current BFA social media following:

- Twitter: 1,657 followers (up from 783 in 2018)
- LinkedIn: 64 followers
- Facebook: 598 followers (up from 465 in 2018)
- Instagram: 107 followers

Research

In 2019, the Research Committee identified and prioritized activities to advance social mission research. The Committee identified "setting a social mission research agenda" as a top priority. As a result, when the opportunity arose under the HRSA Health Workforce Research Centers for additional funding, the Mullan Institute (MI) research team proposed a collaborative social mission research agenda setting initiative. The MI team, led by Clese Erikson (BFA Research Committee member), conducted an extensive literature review and environmental scan of social mission research, and planned to conduct a workshop at the April 2020 Beyond Flexner Conference. Unfortunately, the Conference was postponed due to Covid-19. However, the MI team presented the social mission research agenda work at the Academy Health Workforce Interest Group meeting in October, 2020, and plans to conduct the workshop at the 2021 Virtual Beyond Flexner Conference. In addition, they are developing a manuscript on their literature review, environmental scan, and synthesis/analysis.

BFA Conference

Our original plan was to have the 2020 Beyond Flexner conference in Phoenix, Arizona in collaboration with our partners at A. T. Still University and Arizona State University's Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation. We had exceeded our fundraising goal, raising over \$400,000 for the conference, including funding from new resources including all of the national health professions education organizations (ADEA, AAMC, NLN, and AOA) as well as from previous funders (Kaiser Permanente, Milbank Memorial Fund, AETNA Foundation, and the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation).

By March, it became apparent that we would not be able to hold the conference in-person, so we moved out the date to April 2021 due to COVID-19. With the pandemic having a greater impact than expected, we made the decision to hold the April 2021 conference virtually and scheduled an in-person conference with the same partner schools in March 2022. We are in the process of planning for both conferences and look forward to engaging with our community of educators, researchers, and students.

BFA organizational milestones

Expanding the BFA team

We have been building our faculty and staff as we have been developing initiatives in collaboration with the Fitzhugh Mullan Institute for Health Workforce Equity in 2020. In the Spring and Summer, we interviewed and added a new Director for the Beyond Flexner Alliance, Toyese Oyeyemi, to lead the organization forward.

In addition, we have added two new faculty members, Drs. Jamar Slocum and Maria Portela Martinez, to work with us on the Conference planning and the new Health Workforce Diversity Tracker initiative respectively.

We split some effort with our colleagues to hire three new staff members Julie Orban (Research Scientist), Shalini Raichur (Research Assistant), and Beza Gebru (Research Assistant) to help as we build-out our research agenda. We also hired a graduate research student, Kristi Qirici, to assist the Director on special projects.

Initiating the BFA Internship Program

In May 2020, we were made aware that some GW students had lost their summer research opportunities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In an effort to help, we quickly opened up an 8-week student opportunity and accepted five students from across the country. The first cohort included students from the City University of New York, Yale University, George Washington University, and the University of California at Riverside. We developed a curriculum for them including social media postings, a social mission literature review, a paper on the diversity of US medical

school deans, a webinar in collaboration with the American Medical Student Association, and interviews of the Josiah Macy Jr. Awards program recipients. Students received a stipend for their work. We plan to continue this program and make a concerted effort to make it more interprofessional moving forward.

Beyond Flexner Alliance Team:

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